

# Summarised inspection findings

Deanburn Primary School Nursery Class

Falkirk Council

17 December 2019

## Key contextual information

Deanburn Nursery Class is situated within Deanburn Primary School. The service is registered for a maximum of 45 children at any one time aged three years to those not yet attending primary school. At the time of the inspection the roll was 26 children in the morning session and 19 children in the afternoon. The headteacher has overall responsibility for the early learning and childcare setting. She has designated leadership of the setting to the depute headteacher (DHT). A senior early learning and childcare practitioner is responsible for the day to day management of the setting. She is supported by two full-time equivalent early learning and childcare practitioners.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

**satisfactory**

This indicator focuses on working together at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which reflects the context of the setting within its community. Planning for continuous improvement change should be evidence-based and clearly linked to strong self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure that the pace of change is well judged and appropriate to have a positive impact on outcomes for children. The themes are:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the setting and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- The early learning and childcare setting shares the values of the school of caring, honesty, respect, perseverance and ambition. There is evidence of children being caring, respectful and persevering in activities they have chosen themselves. As planned, senior leaders, practitioners and parents need to agree values and aims that fully reflect the aspirations of the setting and are understood by children. The setting has recently experienced a period of significant change. This includes changes to senior leadership both in school and changes to members of the practitioner team. The DHT has very recently assumed responsibility for the setting and is already taking the lead in planning for improvement. Practitioners appreciate the support they receive from senior leaders however, due to the significant changes, there has been some misunderstanding around their interpretation of key messages. As a result, the team has lost some confidence and practitioners are unsure about the way forward with some aspects of their work. To move this on quickly, senior leaders and practitioners need to be clear about expectations and take responsibility for ensuring all involved in the setting fully understand their roles in improving the service.
- The DHT is fully aware that she needs to provide strong leadership to drive improvement. Practitioners need to revisit national guidance such as *How good is our early learning and childcare?* and *Building the Ambition* to evaluate their practice. This will help to refresh their understanding of early learning pedagogy. We discussed that self-evaluation activities need to be carefully planned, robust and influence change. The DHT has introduced practitioners in early work on self-evaluation. As a result, and with support from the local authority, she has correctly identified three key priorities, which are included in an improvement plan for the setting. These focus on improving the environment for learning, developing opportunities for literacy and numeracy and approaches to planning, tracking and monitoring that are more robust. Practitioners will require clear guidance and ongoing support to take these priorities forward.
- The pace of change overall needs to be accelerated. Practitioners are keen to take on leadership roles and to improve the work of the setting. There is now scope for the team to focus their energies on taking forward the priorities in the improvement plan, led by the DHT. They should take advantage of the support offered by the local authority, focus their

professional development in these areas and cascade learning to each other to reflect on and challenge their understanding. Senior leaders need to have a consistent focus to set timescales and to regularly monitor improvements to ensure greater progress. Regular opportunities for practitioners to discuss their work will identify training and development needs. In doing so this will ensure continuous improvement.

## 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

Satisfactory

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experience for young children. It highlights the importance of a very good understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy. Effective use is made of observation to inform future learning and identify the progress made. Children are involved in planning for their own learning. Together these ensure children's successes and achievements are maximised. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of interactions
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- There is a warm ethos in the setting, with positive relationships throughout. Children feel safe and secure and enjoy exploring open-ended learning opportunities, particularly in the outdoor area where they are learning about risk. Almost all children are engaged and motivated. Children confidently choose where they would like to play throughout the session. They work together positively, for example when mixing paints independently then taking them outside to paint the resources in the garden. Children demonstrate a willingness to support each other as they play and are developing friendships. Practitioners encourage children to develop independence. They provide choices in the learning environment and time and space to explore the resources. There is scope to develop further the core provision in the indoor environment by reviewing and refreshing the resources to offer a broader range of rich learning experiences.
- Practitioners support children's wellbeing through positive interactions and, as a result, children are confident in their environment. Practitioners listen to children and help them to take their ideas forward. There are opportunities for inquiry learning, and children are encouraged to follow their own interests. In order for children to have a deeper understanding of learning, a language of learning now needs to be developed. We discussed the adult's role in instigating learning conversations to enable children to make connections between what they are doing and what they are learning, alongside the skills they are acquiring and using. Developing skills in effective questioning will help practitioners to support and challenge learning more consistently.
- Practitioners know children well as individuals and observe them as they play. These observations form the basis of daily responsive planning. Practitioners need to ensure that they identify significant learning and record this in a manageable way. They need to improve the quality and quantity of observations to identify clear and relevant next steps in learning for individual children.
- Practitioners are developing their approaches to planning to be responsive to children's daily interests. They now need to take account of guidance from the local authority to ensure children's individual and collective needs are planned for to ensure progression.
- Each child has an electronic journal that records experiences and achievements. Practitioners now need to review and refresh this system to ensure it provides a coherent picture of children's learning and progress across the curriculum. While practitioners know children well, they need to know them as learners in order to provide the right level of support and challenge.

- As planned, senior leaders and all practitioners should continue to reflect on, develop and evaluate approaches to planning, tracking and monitoring, ensuring processes are effective in taking forward learning opportunities for all children.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- The curriculum is based on play and linked to children's interests. The children engage with a range of experiences indoors and outdoors, and have free access to the outdoor area for large parts of the day. Children have opportunities to access the nearby woods; however, there is scope to use the community more fully to enhance the curriculum. Practitioners refer to national guidance as they plan. Overall, there is a need for senior leaders and practitioners to develop a clear rationale to help inform the future direction of the curriculum.
- The curriculum places an important emphasis on health and wellbeing, and children are happy and enjoy being in the setting. Outdoor learning encourages children to be curious, to enquire and to problem-solve. As planned, next steps in curriculum development should include a deeper focus on literacy and numeracy across all areas of play. Practitioners should consider the design principles of the curriculum to ensure that it provides breadth, depth and challenge for all children.
- Practitioners are aware of the need to support children at points of transition and provide opportunities for parents and children to visit the setting before they start. There is a programme of activities to support transition into Primary1, including visits to the school, support from a buddy, and a story with their new teacher. There is scope for practitioners and teachers to develop their understanding of learning progression at the early level and share practice.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- See choice QI.

## 2.1 Safeguarding

- The setting submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the setting and the education authority.



### 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

Satisfactory

This indicator reflects on the setting's approach to children's wellbeing which underpins their ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of each individual. A clear focus on wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all children to be the best they can be and celebrates their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- Practitioners have formed positive relationships with children and their families. They greet children warmly and make them feel welcome. Practitioners give children who require a little more support to separate from their parent or carer time to settle and become more confident. As a result, most children appear to feel secure and enjoying their play. They are learning to share and take turns, showing affection and consideration for each other. A few children are beginning to make important friendships. Practitioners display a chart of the wellbeing indicators of 'Getting it right for every child' (GIRFEC) to help parents understand how they relate to their children's wellbeing. There is scope for practitioners to improve their own and children's understanding of the wellbeing indicators. This will help identify how they can support children to understand what it means to be safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included. This work should be more explicit in planning across the year to ensure children develop a full understanding of the indicators. We discussed with the setting the benefits of ensuring there are frequent real life experiences where children can apply and deepen their understanding in a way that is meaningful.
- Practitioners give children a few opportunities to take responsibility when they help to prepare snack. They are beginning to learn how to take care of resources when they carefully tidy away. There is scope to provide more opportunities for children to take responsibility, for example, by helping to risk assess the outdoor area. There are opportunities for children to enjoy the benefits of fresh air and exercise when they play in the garden or as planned, spend time learning in the nearby woods. They confidently climb, balance and ride trikes. Children use the space in the large gym hall well. They are learning to throw, catch, roll and bounce balls. There is scope for practitioners to plan for children to progressively develop their physical skills further.
- Practitioners are aware of statutory requirements and their professional responsibility in fulfilling them. Helpfully, practitioners display clear guidance for parents on child protection procedures and what to expect should there be any concerns. Practitioners work with health partners when there are concerns around children's development. They work closely with speech and language professionals to support identified children. Practitioners are trained in early communication which should help them to support children in developing communication and language skills. Children who are care experienced have appropriate support plans in place. There is scope for practitioners to seek professional advice to ensure appropriate support children for whom English is not their first language. The team do not yet fully document and regularly review progress for children who require additional support. Practitioners should continue to be alert to children's behaviours and when they might cause concern.
- Practitioners are welcoming and inclusive of all children and families. Positive, respectful relationships help them to support families. The key worker system helps them to know

children well. There is scope for children to extend their knowledge further of diversity in the wider world. This will help them to begin to understand and respect that people across Scotland and the around the world have different life experiences to themselves. Practitioners provide a non-discriminatory environment where children's play is not limited by their gender. We discussed that building on this good start, the challenging of discriminations should include the explicit challenge of potential gender stereotypes for example, as they appear in many children's stories and nursery rhymes.

### 3.2 Securing children's progress

satisfactory

This indicator relates to the development and learning of babies, toddlers and young children. It requires clear understanding of early learning and development and pedagogy. It reflects the integrated way young children learn and the importance of experiences and development happening on an individual basis within a supportive, nurturing and stimulating environment. High quality early learning and childcare contributes significantly to enhancing children's progress and achievement as they grow and learn. It can benefit all children by closing the attainment gap and ensuring equity for all. It is about the holistic nature of development and learning ensuring these foundations are secure in order to achieve future attainment success. The themes are:

- progress in communication, early language, mathematics, and health and wellbeing
  - children's progress over time
  - overall quality of children's achievement
  - ensuring equity for all children
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- Overall, children are making satisfactory progress. Practitioners have created a welcoming, trusting ethos for children, with a focus on open-ended learning opportunities. Children in the setting are confident and eager to learn. Practitioners now need to build on the knowledge and experiences children bring with them from home to increase the aspirations and expectations of progress for all children. They should build on the existing strengths of the nursery and increase opportunities to learn and apply early literacy, numeracy and mathematical skills.
  - Relationships are positive and caring, and practitioners focus well on aspects of children's health and wellbeing. Children happily work together to share resources and take turns. They are aware of the importance of a healthy, active lifestyle. They are developing their physical skills in the outdoor area and the gym. Visits to the local woods are enabling children to develop an appreciation of the natural world. Children express their likes and dislikes confidently and there is scope to involve them further in leading aspects of the life of the setting.
  - The majority of children are articulate, take part in conversations with each other and are confident chatting to adults. Most children listen well and follow instructions. Children enjoy role-play and incorporate their own stories into many aspects of their play. Most children enjoy group story telling sessions. There is considerable scope to develop these sessions to broaden and deepen learning. Practitioners should also ensure that there are opportunities for children to enjoy books and stories individually and in small groups. Most children recognise their name when self-registering for snack, for example, and a few are attempting to write their name. Children would benefit from opportunities to develop further their early writing skills through increased mark making and drawing opportunities and writing in real-life contexts. Overall, practitioners should now consider how they could provide more challenging experiences within play. They need to embed experiences for communication and early language fully across learning, including through real-life experiences.
  - Children have some opportunities to explore mathematical learning through play. There are opportunities for children to develop their awareness of number, and a few children were observed mark-making numbers and recognising numerals. Practitioners now need to provide richer mathematics and numeracy opportunities for the children both indoors and out. The setting has correctly identified mathematical learning as a priority in their improvement plan. Professional discussion to support a shared understanding of early mathematical skills will help

to ensure further improvement in the quality of learning and teaching. It will also enable practitioners to plan more effectively for high-quality experiences to extend and deepen children's learning.

- Practitioners use electronic journals to evidence learning. This is at the early stages of implementation. Practitioners need to develop more consistent observations of children's learning. They should ensure that next steps are identified and children's progress is tracked over time more effectively.
- Practitioners encourage families to celebrate children's achievements through 'star moments' which are displayed in the entrance area. These illustrate the experiences children bring from home. Practitioners should now recognise and celebrate children's achievements within the setting and include these to support children's progress.

## Choice of QI : 2.7 Partnerships

- Engagement of parents and carers in the life of the setting
- The promotion of partnership
- Impact on children and families

- Parents and carers are welcomed into the setting and are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning. They value termly opportunities to stay and play when they interact with the children and learn more about their experiences. They provide thoughtful feedback to practitioners around the impact of their visit and how they will help their children at home. There is scope for more regular opportunities to encourage this valuable experience further. Practitioners plan to resume Big chef, little chef sessions when children and families cook together. This shared experience helps children and their parents or carers to share learning together. Parents volunteer to help to escort children on outings. This facilitates children accessing outdoor learning experiences in the nearby woods.
- Throughout the session, children in the setting have some opportunities to move around the school when they attend assemblies, use the gym hall and visit the library. There is scope for the setting to be more fully involved in the life and work of the school for example by being represented on committees and more closely with primary one to support continuity and progression through the early level. The setting works closely with agencies to support children's development as appropriate. It benefits from central support from the local authority. Links with local early learning and childcare providers helps to support children who split their placements. There is scope for links with the local community to be developed further to help children to understand their local area.
- Practitioners keep parents informed of their children's learning through online journals and twice-yearly contact meetings. Parents engage with the setting through the opportunities for visiting and volunteering. Children borrow books from the lending library to share with their families at home. Practitioners are about to start sending home story sacks which will encourage reading at home further and encourage dialogue between the setting and home. The setting encourages parental participation. Practitioners have encouraged parents to share their skills and experiences in the workplace. This encourages children to think about what they might like to do when they grow up. Practitioners should encourage parents further to share their skills and talents as appropriate to enrich learning experiences for children.

### 1. Quality of care and support

- Staff were kind and caring in their interactions and supported children well when they were upset and in need of comfort. As a result, children were confident and happy. They had opportunities to develop independence skills, such as, preparing snack. The flow and pace of the day supported uninterrupted child led play experiences. This helped children to join in with role play games and develop social and communication skills.
- We suggested that staff considered using the language of the wellbeing indicators (safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included) when talking to children. For example, telling them how responsible they were when helping to tidy up. This would help staff and children to understand and use the wellbeing indicators in a meaningful way. Similarly, staff should become more familiar with framework documents, such as, 'Building the Ambition' and 'National Health and Social Care Standards' to improve outcomes for children. There were missed opportunities to enhance children's learning. Well timed skilled interventions and effective questioning would support deeper thinking and learning to help children to achieve.
- All children had an electronic learning journal. Moving forward, staff should be supported to understand how they can better capture and support children's individual significant learning through effective use of observations. Next steps in learning should then be used to inform planning. This would support children to make appropriate progress in their learning. While planning took account of children's interests, it did not take account of individual learning needs. Similarly, six monthly meetings with parents should focus more on next steps in learning. See recommendation 1.
- Children participated in preparing the healthy, nutritious snack, which supported healthy eating habits. Speaking with staff, we were confident that they understood their role in protecting children's care and welfare needs. Similarly, we found that the general practice in the areas of managing medication and recording accidents and incidents were effective. We advised that long term medication should be reviewed with parents every three months. An audit of accidents should be kept, addressing any repeated issues, such as, several accidents on one piece of play equipment. This would help to keep children safe.
- All children had a 'personal health review' which set out how their needs were met. We advised that these should be reviewed and updated at least every six months, in line with current legislation. Similarly, we advised that contact details should be included on this form. This would ensure that important information about children's care and welfare was up to date in order to meet their current needs. See recommendation 2.
- Staff were responsive to the needs of children. Moving forward, in preparation for providing longer sessions, they could consider developing their understanding of nurturing approaches to support children's emotional wellbeing and resilience.

### Care Inspectorate grade: adequate

## 2. Quality of environment

- The quality of the environment was adequate. The bright, spacious playroom provided direct access to outdoors. Children had the opportunity to explore and make choices and some areas were resourced to support positive outcomes for children. The environment was safe and secure and of an expected standard of cleanliness. This kept children safe and healthy. The toilets had recently been relocated to be adjacent to the playroom, resulting in children being able to independently go to the toilet.
- The outdoor area was resourced with play materials to dig, climb, balance and explore. We observed children using the outdoor tap to fill watering cans and bottles to transport water to other areas. There was a range of natural open ended play materials, (loose parts), such as tyres, planks of wood, stones and tubing. Similarly, loose parts were being introduced in the playroom. We suggested that staff continue to develop their understanding of the benefits of loose parts play, which help children to develop creativity skills and offer challenging experiences.
- Signage around the room and sequence cards helped children to make choices and follow routines. For example, the hand washing routine displayed beside sinks. Staff should consider developing literacy throughout the playroom, such as, a good selection of different sized, shape and coloured paper, card and stickers and a range of attractively displayed books, including books that children have made themselves. Similarly, we advised that displays could be improved to support children's investigation.
- Overall, consideration needed to be given to the management of the indoor learning environment. Areas required to be tidied, organised and resources displayed attractively, to invite children's curiosity and interest. Resources could be more varied and challenging to increase opportunities for children to engage in rich experiences. This would extend and support progression in learning. For example, a range of materials to support numeracy and maths, such as, to explore weight, volume and measurement. This would challenge children's thinking. Resources should be added to raise awareness of differences, such as culture.
- There was scope to improve digital technology resources; this would provide opportunities for children to develop skills in using and exploring digital technologies. We suggested that staff considered a designated area for digital exploration.
- In line with plans for the expansion of early learning and childcare, options were being considered to provide longer sessions for funded children. To accommodate this, a cosy, nurture area should be developed. This would provide a homely space for them to rest, relax and be alone, should they wish.
- Moving forward, senior leaders should put an effective system in place to monitor, evaluate and review the environment. This would be to ensure that there was an enabling environment to support play and learning. See recommendation 3.

### Care Inspectorate grade: adequate

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had no requirements and no recommendations. As a result of this inspection, there are no requirements and three recommendations.

## Recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** The provider should ensure that staff keep documented information about the progress of children's development and learning. This could include:

- staff being supported to understand how they can better capture and support children's individual significant learning through effective use of observations
- developing an understanding of the GIRFEC wellbeing indicators and Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)
- next steps in children's learning being used to inform future planning, which will support children to make progress in their learning
- staff tracking children's individual progress more effectively
- all records dated to show clear progression.

This will strengthen the planning and documentation of children's progression and achievements.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that "I am supported to achieve my potential in education and employment if this is right for me". (HSCS 1.27).

**Recommendation 2:** The provider should support children's continued health, wellbeing and safety by updating information held on children in their 'Personal Health Review' at least every six months or sooner if needed.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that "My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices". (HSCS 1.15).

**Recommendation 3:** The provider should put an effective system in place to monitor, evaluate and review the environment, to ensure it is an enabling environment to support play and learning. This could include:

- tidying and organising areas and displaying resources attractively, to invite children's curiosity and interest
- creating a homely environment, by introducing soft furnishing, low lighting and a comfortable adult chair to allow children to be comforted in a relaxing environment
- introducing more varied and challenging resources to increase opportunities for children to engage in rich learning experiences.

This will create a motivating environment to maximise effective learning.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that "I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment". (HSCS 5.22).



## Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.